

M-Braves claim Double-A South
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vaccinations to homebound - pg. 16

Good News You Can Use
SWRANKIN NEWS

Vol. 6, No. 10 | October 2021

The Pearl News

THE NEWS
RICHLAND

THE FLORENCE NEWS

"Trick or Treat Street" returns in 2021

Special to The Pearl News

The City of Pearl will once again host the annual "Trick or Treat Street" on Saturday, October 23, and they encourage all local groups and organizations to participate. The evening's agenda kicks off at 6 p.m. and runs until 8 p.m.

Those interested in becoming a booth host for this event are asked to complete a booth by visiting www.cityof-pearl.com/live/cityevents. Applicants must provide a name of an individual and/or their business, contact phone number, contact email and the number of booths requested. All booth hosts must provide their tent, table, chairs, etc. There are no fees to host a booth.

Booth hosts are required to decorate their area in a child-friendly Halloween

or fall theme. Gates will open for booth set-up at 3 p.m. on October 23.

All set-ups must be completed by 6 p.m., and each host must provide candy to accommodate at least 1,000 trick-or-treaters. Although not required, the City does suggest each booth plan to hold a simple game or activity to be played at their location. In keeping with the Halloween theme of the event, participants are encouraged to dress up in costume.

Booths may not sell items at this event.

The deadline to return the application is Friday, October 15, by 4 p.m.

Currently, the City is planning for an outdoor event on Shepherd Field (the football field directly behind City Hall). It will be held, rain or shine. If



Special to The Pearl News

rain is forecast that day, the event will move indoors to the Muse Center at Hinds Community College (Rankin Campus).

If strict COVID-19 guidelines for public meetings are in effect, the City will transition Trick or Treat Street to a drive thru event in the parking lot of the Muse Center.

Under both alternatives, there will still be plenty of room for all groups that want to participate.

Pearl City Hall is located at 2420 Old Brandon Road in Pearl.

The Clyde Muse Center is located at 515 Country Place Parkway, also in Pearl. Applications should be submitted to Stacy Smith at ssmith@cityof-pearl.com. For more information, call 601-863-3229.

CMDSS hosts annual "Buddy Walk" at Trustmark Park



Special to The Pearl News

Special to The Pearl News

Central Mississippi Down Syndrome Society (CMDSS) hosted its 2021 "Buddy Walk" on October 9 at Trustmark Park in Pearl. The purpose of this annual event is to support central Mississippians affected by Down syndrome.

CMDSS is a parent-driven non-profit organization that provides support services for parents of children with Down syndrome and promotes awareness, acceptance, and inclusion of individuals with Down syndrome. CMDSS programs currently support more than 350 families in the Central Mississippi area. The Annual Buddy Walk / 5K Run is

held during October in celebration of National Down Syndrome Awareness month, and typically attracts more than 1000 walkers. It is CMDSS's biggest awareness event and fundraiser, helping to support CMDSS programs.

Trustmark Park in particular has proven to be a great fit for the event, as the "Mississippi Braves staff are always supportive and accommodating of our needs," says Executive Director of CMDSS Jennifer Babl.

For more information about
CMDSS and this year's Buddy
Walk, see page 10.

Increase coming to Pearl customers in October

Special to The Pearl News

City of Pearl residents and businesses will see changes to their water-sewer bill rates starting in October as the new West Rankin Utility Authority's wastewater treatment plant becomes operational. Pearl joins other Rankin County cities and state agencies that are leaving the City of Jackson's services to use the new state-of-the-art facility built in Richland. Pearl customers will see a slight increase based on their water

usage. The Board of Aldermen approved the new rates at the regular board meeting on September 7. As an example, a current bill of \$51.01 under the new rate will increase to \$65.43.

Mayor Jake Windham explained that the City was going to see rate increases regardless of the move to the West Rankin plant. The City of Jackson's current wastewater plant is in need of repairs that would cost Pearl and other

[illegible]

Special to The Pearl News

would have been even higher had Pearl stayed with Jackson, just to fix the old plant.

Mayor Windham recently explained in detail the new rates on the City's weekly community affairs program, "This Week in Pearl," on Pearl Municipal Broadcasting Television. The program is available on-demand anytime, as PMBtv is on Roku, Amazon Firestick TV, and the City of Pearl Youtube Page.

A horizontal banner advertisement for Generac. On the left, a dark house is partially visible behind a large orange diagonal shape. The word "GENERAC" is written in white on the orange shape. To the right of the house, the word "FREE" is written in large white letters, followed by "7-Year Extended Warranty*" and "A \$695 Value!" in smaller white text. Below this, it says "Limited Time Offer – Call for Details". On the right side of the banner, there is a white Generac generator unit. Above the generator, the text "REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!" is written in white, followed by the phone number "601-460-0256" in large white letters. Below the phone number, it says "Special Financing Available" and "Subject to Credit Approval". At the bottom right, in small white text, it says: "To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions." The background of the banner is a mix of orange and dark grey.

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Richland celebrates Halloween in style

By Alexa Haik

The City of Richland and Richland Mayor's Youth Council will host "Nightmare on Harper Street" Friday, October 22, from 7:30 p.m. until 10 p.m., at the Richland Community Center. Ages eight and above are invited to attend the annual event and celebration. Children under the age of eight may also attend, but must be accompanied by an adult.

Halloween festivities continue on Saturday morning, October 23, beginning at 9 a.m. with the Richland Fallfest Car Show "Spooktacular." The four-hour show will include door prizes, a 50/50 raffle, numerous children's activities, and awards. Based on popular vote, there will be an award for best decorated car, best decorated



Special to The Richland News

ed truck, best dressed driver, best dressed child, best dressed pet and an overall best

in show.

There is a \$25 entry fee per vehicle. The

first fifty registration forms received will win a dash plate.

Also scheduled for Saturday at the Richland Community Center is the "2021 Highway 49 Fall Fest and Kid's Fun" event for kids ages eight and under. Running from 4 p.m. until 7:30 p.m., the kid-friendly event will include games, inflatables, and face painting. The first 100 attendees will also be given the opportunity to select a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch.

The annual "Nightmare on Harper Street" will cap off the Saturday evening festivities, beginning at 7:30 p.m. and winding down by 10 p.m.

The Richland Community Center is located at 410 East Harper Street. For further information about these events or registration, call 601-420-3402.

The story of RHS's Fire Academy

By Alexa Haik

It all started in 2016, as an eight-week after-school program for seniors. The program's purpose was to scout out potential new hires to fill in gaps within the City of Richland's roster at the fire department. After a promising start, Richland High School's (RHS) principal at the time, Dr. William Sutton, was interested in putting the program inside the school full-time to give students another career path to explore. In 2017, the Fire Academy was officially established and began providing fire science skill instruction in earnest.

Many fire departments do host after school programs in the State of Mississippi, or what are referred to as junior firefighter programs, but many of those are geared towards younger kids, usually under the age of twelve. There are also law and public safety courses offered within school districts that provide a firefighter portion, but typically two weeks of instruction total are dedicated

to fire service. To date, RHS is the only fire academy of its kind, offered by a public school district in the state.

The RHS program has been designed as a two-year program for students tenth grade and above. They utilize classroom instruction and hands-on demonstrations to provide students with a foundation in fire science.

Ashley Hinton, Student Services Coordinator with Rankin County School District, assists the academy's CTE (Career Technical Education) teachers during the early spring semester with recruiting. Recruiting allows the academy an opportunity to share information about all of the CTE programs to the student body at RHS while facilitating an increase in enrollments. They reach out through school social media posts, school announcements, preview nights for parents and students, and in-class visits. Since 2017, the number of students enrolled in the Fire Academy has grown. They hope to have over twenty students matriculated by 2022.



Special to The Richland News

Students in training at Richland High School's Fire Academy, pictured (l to r) are: Graham Hulsey, Nate Jolly, Amelia Negrete, Logan Rayburn, Robert Williams, Cameron Cliburn and Chloe Knippers.

Hinton is a 2003 graduate of RHS and has been employed with the City of Richland since 2004. Starting out as an emergency tele-communicator, she was eventually transferred to the fire department at the age of twenty-one. She currently holds the rank of Captain and has

been the lead instructor since the academy's inception.

For details on the RHS Fire Academy's newest facility and resources, see page 8.

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Florence festivities return, promising a great line up for 2021

Special to The Florence News

Florence Fest is back in 2021 and promises to be a day filled with fun activities and sponsored events. This year, in addition to a car show, vendor market, food trucks, and inflatables for kids, there will be live music, as well as a pet costume contest. Admission is free.

The Saturday, October 23, agenda kicks off at 10 a.m. at Hemphill Park with a car show. For those interested in entering a vehicle in the show, a registration form must be completed, which includes contact information, a description of the vehicle, the owner's club affiliation if applicable, and the miles travelled to attend the event. Sign in starts at 8:30 a.m. the day of the event.

There is a \$20 registration fee for the car show. Completed forms and fees may mailed to: City of Florence/Car Show, P.O. Box 187, Florence, Missis-



sippi, 39073 or completed in person at Florence City Hall, located at 203 College Street in Florence.

The children's costume parade is scheduled shortly after, at 10:30 a.m. Participants are asked to meet at the big pavilion.

Following at 12 p.m., the Florentine Club will sponsor a pet costume contest



Florence Fest 2019.



Photos special to The Florence News

Florence Fest 2019.

at the gazebo behind City Hall on Earl Clark Drive. Registration is \$20 per pet, and proceeds go to the Mississippi Animal Rescue League. All animals

must be on a leash, and pet owners are required to clean up after their pet.

To pre-register for the pet contest, contact Diane Rouse at 601-454-5350, or register on-site starting at 11:30 a.m.

The Georgetown Band will be the live entertainment for Florence Fest 2021 and will begin their set list at noon.

The following weekend, on Sunday, October 31, "The Church Has Left The Building/Florence Area Churches" will host the Florence Fall Festival. Local families are encouraged to visit Hemphill Park on Halloween night, from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m., where there will be games and activities free of charge. Local food vendors will also be on-site during the event.

Hemphill Park is located at 437 South Church Street in Florence. For more information, visit www.cityofflorencems.com or call 601-845-5858.

"Eagles Rising," a fundraiser for FHS athletics

Special to The Florence News

Florence High School (FHS) English Department and Varsity Dance Coach Amy McAllister, along with sixteen of her peers, has organized a fundraiser on behalf of the FHS Touchdown Club. The past year has been a challenging one for everyone, and varsity sports and activities are no exception. Constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic put a huge strain on all Florence Eagle sports and activities.

The long list of programs affected in the 2020-21 school year includes: Eagle football, where fundraisers were canceled and/or downsized, with ticket sales limited to twenty-five percent capacity; the FHS Big Red Band, where fundraisers were canceled and twenty-five percent capacity at football games meant low sales at the band's concession stand; the FHS Spirit Teams, who were unable to collect donations via roadblocks or public donation buckets; FHS Varsity Dance and Varsity Cheer's Homecoming Dance fundraiser, which was canceled, mini-camps canceled, and low capacity at games reduced spirit item and shirt sales; FHS Soccer and Lady Eagles Soccer program, which operated at twenty-five percent capacity; FHS Ea-

gle and Lady Eagle Basketball, which operated at twenty-five percent capacity with low concession stand sales; FHS Baseball and Softball's, whose entire 2019-20 season was canceled, leading to no ticket revenue and no concession sales with a reduced capacity for 2020-21 season; FHS Volleyball, which operated at twenty-five percent capacity; the FHS Prom Committee, whose expenses were doubled for the 2021 prom due to COVID-19 regulations; and multiple student clubs



Special to The Florence News

and organizations who were unable to organize during the 2020-21 school year due to COVID-19 regulations and therefore, had no funds to restart. Currently, FHS is reaching out to the community, alums, and fans to support this campaign in an effort to rebuild sports and activities for FHS students. In keeping with the spirit of their fundraising efforts, the 2021 homecoming game's theme, held October 1, was "Eagles Rising." FHS is planning to devote the theme to helping the Eagles rise with community events, class challenges, and on-line fundraisers. Visit <https://gofund.me/279cb440> to make a donation. All monetary contributions will go directly to benefit the school organizations listed above.

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Florence infant benefits from the work of Children's of Mississippi

By Annie Oeth

Dr. Catherine Zimmerman has known Memphis Stephenson since before he was born.

The pediatric orthopaedist began seeing Memphis in utero, after his mother, Brianna Stephenson of Florence, was referred to her before Memphis entered the world, when it was suspected that he might be born with a clubfoot.

"We had a consultation before Memphis was born, so we could talk about the treatment process," Stephenson said. "Memphis was born with a right clubfoot."

A healthy baby, Memphis was ready to begin treatment when he was two weeks old.

In the U.S., about one in every 1,000 babies is born with clubfoot, and about half of babies with the condition have it in both feet, according to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

A birth defect that causes a baby's foot to be turned inward, clubfoot isn't painful in infancy, but the condition will not improve without treatment. An untreated clubfoot will cause a child to walk with an abnormal gait, leading to pain and arthritis.

Early noninvasive treatment for clubfeet uses the Ponseti method, which consists of gentle stretching and ma-



Dr. Catherine Zimmerman shows Memphis Stephenson's mom Brianna of Florence how his bracing will work.

nipulation of the foot, which is held in place with casts that are changed weekly.

After this, a small surgery on the Achilles tendon is performed for final correction before moving into the bracing period.

With early treatment, most children born with clubfeet can walk, run and play without the need of major reconstructive surgery.

Memphis was two weeks old when he received his first Ponseti cast.

"Memphis did well with the traditional Ponseti casting technique, underwent his tenotomy and was ready for his foot



Photos special to SW Rankin News

This abduction brace is similar to the one Memphis now wears to correct his clubfoot.

abduction brace in early August," Zimmerman said.

The brace, often referred to as "boots and bar," is worn full time for three

months. He will then be weaned out of them until he only wears them at night when sleeping, which will happen around his first birthday. Memphis will continue wearing them at night until he's four-and-a-half- to five-years-old.

After a baby is weaned off wearing braces during the day, it can be easy for parents, facing the challenges of raising an active toddler, to forget putting the braces on at night.

"Recurrence is real, though," Zimmerman said.

A child who wears the boots and bar properly through age four has a recurrence rate of about 6 percent. However, children who stop treatment at two have a seventy percent chance of the clubfoot returning, Zimmerman said.

"Treatment for clubfoot has to be followed, or it will reoccur one hundred percent of the time," Zimmerman said. "This is why wearing a brace properly and consistently is so important."

"If the clubfoot returns, we have to start the whole process over again, and there is no guarantee the results will be as good," she said. "What we want to do is avoid the need for bony surgery on the foot."

Now three months old, "Memphis is doing really well," Stephenson said. "He's getting calf muscles from raising his legs with the boots on."

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Richland's Students of the Month

Dennis steps up for Golden Eagles



Richland High School (RHS) recently named the August 2021 Students of the Month. These students are nominated and selected by their teachers for such qualities as dependability, attitude, leadership, attendance, and class work. Pictured (l to r) front row, are: Makayla Sanford, Sarah Beth Bates and Jordan Osborne; and back row: Isaiah Harris and Ajoni Chambers. Not pictured is Chloe Knippers.

By Datti Jinkiri

Florence High School graduate Brad Dennis entered this season with the Southern Miss football team poised to make an impact. The redshirt junior has featured mainly on special teams during his career. However, he made his second ever start at wide receiver in the Golden Eagles' season opener against South Alabama.

Despite Southern Miss' 31-7 loss, Dennis recorded three catches for twenty-six yards.

In an interview with USM Sports Information, Southern Miss Head Coach Will Hall claimed that Dennis is a "tough guy" who represents the program well.

"Brad does everything right and brings a lot to the table," Hall stated.

Dennis played quarterback at Florence before changing positions in college. He now looks ready to be a key contributor to the Golden Eagles' receiving corps in his fourth season in Hattiesburg.



Courtesy of USM Athletics

Brad Dennis, wide receiver for University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg

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Obituaries

NAME	AGE	CITY	DOD	Funeral Home
Johnny Fritz Bracy	68	Florence, MS	8/31/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
James "Jim" Chancellor	87	Pearl, MS	9/2/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Trevor McKinley	28	Florence, MS	8/21/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Billy Earwood	64	Florence, MS	9/3/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Jams "Jim" Stewart	83	Florence, MS	9/5/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Jeffery "Jeff" Jennings	58	Florence, MS	9/6/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Linda Rodgers	56	Florence, MS	9/6/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Brian Dedric Morris	46	Florence, MS	9/7/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
David "Joe" Price	69	Florence, MS	9/8/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Cheryl Lee Gentry Wilmut	32	Poplarville, MS	9/9/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Cecelia Campbell King	65	Florence, MS	9/10/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Dorothy "Dot" F. Wilson	89	Richland, MS	9/13/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Brenda Steen	71	Florence, MS	9/14/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Lois "Pinkie" Cochran Pace	82	Florence, MS	9/14/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Janath Arrington Gentry	59	Florence, MS	9/15/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Charlotte "Ann" Crider	59	Pearl, MS	9/19/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Brenda Brewer Carter	57	Florence, MS	9/20/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Jenny Marie Staggs	44	Florence, MS	9/21/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Tandy Wayne Wansley	64	Florence, MS	9/21/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Robert David Cummings	46	Florence, MS	9/27/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Sharon "Sheri" Farmer	65	Florence, MS	9/27/2021	Chancellor FH Florence
Joseph Kersh	66	Florence, MS	9/24/2021	Chancellor FH Florence

Hamilton presents son with hard-earned service pin



Coty Hamilton of the Richland Police Department was recently presented with his fifteen-year service pin by the City of Richland Aldermen John Hamilton at the September 21 Board Meeting.

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Old Truths for Today
Are We Living In “Perilous Times”?

Matt. 7:21-29
J.T. Morgan

Inspiration warned, “that in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim.3:1). “Perilous times” defined: “perilous” is from the Greek word CHALEPOS. Vine’s defines the term, “hard to bear, painful, grievous.” Thayer defines it, “hard to bear, troublesome, dangerous.” From these definitions we can clearly see that Timothy would need the strongest determination possible as well as an unfaltering loyalty to Christ to meet the “perilous times”. The same is needed today! Christians in the 1st century faced times which fit the above descriptions, but Paul does not limit those conditions to any one specific time. There were trying times during the present day of his writing and also in the future, which is included in “the last days”.

Paul describes the character of people who would make the last days “perilous”. (2 Tim.3:2-8). The “last days” are the Christian Age in which we now live. Even casual observers would surely concede that the world we presently live in is a product of “perilous times”. Changes in this present century are breathtaking and evident. We have seen “times” getting worse rather than better. Most everyone of “age” would have never dreamed our nation would be in the condition it is in. The younger generations have not seen these dangerous changes because they just live in them and accept them. They assume the present to be just normal and are not concerned as older people are.

In addition to Paul’s warnings to Timothy, there are many other warnings in both the Old and New Testaments, which speak of times that would be perilous or grievous. Isaiah sounded many warnings and one that could have been sounded yesterday: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil: that put darkness for light and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet, for bitter”. (Isa.5:20). Those who see the murder of innocent children by abortion and uphold homosexuality are engaging in the principle about which the prophet is speaking. What was a “woe” then is still a “woe” today!

A warning in the New Testament given to the elders at Ephesus has long since become a reality. (Acts 20:29-31). Just as the church at Ephesus succumbed to “grievous wolves” has perhaps become much worse in our “age”. More and more Christians are turning away from the Truth indicating a lack of serious concern.

In Romans chapter 1, Paul describes the prevailing evil among the nations. Then he speaks of God giving them up to vile affections which included homosexuality (v.26-27). He then mentions several things included in the definition of “perilous time” noted earlier. He concludes by saying that those who commit such things are “worthy of death” (v.32).

In writing to Timothy, Paul warns of persecution to be endured by the faithful saying: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers hall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim.3:12-13). This is happening even as I write this article. No one can truthfully deny that evil men are waxing worse and worse in our present world and fewer and fewer people are showing serious concern. “Perilous times” are here and we observe the detrimental influence it has upon people in our day.

Florence Church of Christ, P.O. Box 277, 220 White Street
Florence, Ms 39073
Visitors are always welcome!

Spaytacular Dinner Theatre, "an evening of hilarity"



Event Artwork by Daphne Nabors, Event Photography by Mark Geil

Special to SW Rankin News

Saturday, October 23, from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m., Ecoshed and Mississippi Spay & Neuter -The Big Fix Clinic will host "The Detective's Dinner Theatre." All proceeds support the spay/neuter fund, which ensures that every animal can receive spay/neuter services and that cost is never a barrier. The venue for this year's event, Ecoshed, includes both an indoor and outdoor seating area. COVID-19 protocols and weather permitting, the event may be moved to the outdoor area. As the event gets closer, organizers will continue to follow CDC guidelines to keep guests safe.

The public is invited to join MSSPAN "for an evening of hilarity for a good cause!" The Detectives Dinner Theatre will be performing an original play.

The Detectives Comedy Dinners have been performing for eleven years all over the southeast. All shows are originals written by Keni Bounds and Eric Riggs.

Their marketing materials promise that

the shows "are quite possibly the funniest shows you'll see this year. It's like Clue but funnier...and you get dinner!"

Each ticket purchase includes hors d'oeuvres and one Tito's signature drink. Additional drinks will be available at the bar.

Registration is \$40 for event entry. Cocktail hour begins at 6 p.m. and runs until showtime at 7 p.m. Proof of COVID-19 vaccination is required for all attendees.

Visit www.msspan.org/spaytacular_dinner_theatre to purchase tickets, to donate to or bid on the silent auction or to become an event sponsor. Raffle tickets may be purchased at: www.mississippiispayneuter.betterworld.org/giveaways/50-50-raffle-fall-2021. Those who purchase raffle tickets are not required to be present at the event to participate.

The Ecoshed is located at 133 Commerce Park Drive in Jackson, MS 39213. For more information, contact Shelby at shelby@msspan.org or 601-420-2438.

Duncan named NJCAA and MACCC Player of the Week



Special to SW Rankin News

Ben Duncan, freshman placekicker for Hinds Community College.

Datti Jinkiri

Ben Duncan has been named Special Teams Player of the Week by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) for his performance at Northeast Mississippi Community College.

The productive week for Duncan also landed him the Special Teams Player of the Week honor by the Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference.

Duncan, a Florence native, played a

huge part in the Hinds Community College (Hinds CC) Eagle's 18-13 victory on the road against the Tigers.

The freshman placekicker contributed ten points out of the eighteen scored by Hinds CC. These ten points came on three made field goals and one made extra point. The field goals made by Duncan were from twenty-five, twenty-seven and thirty-two (season long) yards out.

Fans can watch Hinds football games live at <https://hindscsports.net/channel-1/>.

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New facility allows RHS Fire Academy room to grow



RHS Fire Academy recruits being put through their paces.



Photos special to SW Rankin News

By Alexa Haik

Among many things, 2021 will be remembered as the first year Richland High School's (RHS) Fire Academy had full access to a facility dedicated to their program. The new building on the RHS campus was part of a Rankin County School District bond issue, and it provides classrooms for the Fire Academy, Business Academy and many other academic classrooms. Prior to the opening of the new building in August 2021, the fire classes were held in a portable classroom. The new classroom has opened up new possibilities for instruction and has improved the overall experience of the Fire Academy.

In addition to a classroom measuring at 3200 square feet, they now have enough equipment to outfit thirteen students with gear and three Conex boxes

(shipping containers) used to simulate fire ground operations, such as fire suppression, search and rescue, confined space rescue, rope rescue, vehicle extrication, and forcible entry. Currently, there are fourteen students enrolled in the one-of-a-kind program.

The Richland Fire Department has played an integral part in the success of the program with equipment donations, as well as full access to manpower, equipment, and apparatus. Success of the program can be attributed, in part, to their dedication and support, as well as the support received from the City of Richland itself.

Instructors include Micah Sanford and Corey Adams, both Richland High School graduates and full-time members of the Richland Fire Department. As far as curriculum, a typical daily schedule consists of instructions begin-

ning with a quick skill as an ice breaker for the day. This is followed by thirty to forty-five minutes of classroom instruction, eventually moving on to actual hands-on training. Unique to RHS's program, hands-on training is a critical and essential part of the training to prepare students for a future in firefighting.

Students who express an interest in the fire academy may join the two-year program as sophomores. All students are eligible to take the class, but it is important to note that the program is physically demanding. That said, the instructors will take into account the challenges and abilities each student brings to the program, and will modify instruction if needed to optimize their learning experience.

Since its inception, the fire academy has received the prestigious Mississippi Association of Partners in Education

Partnership of Excellence Award a total of three times, in 2017, 2020, and 2021.

The RHS Fire Academy has graduated approximately forty students overall. Graduates have gone on to become professionals in a wide array of first-responder specialties, including full-time firefighters, EMT-basics, EMT-paramedics, law enforcement officers, and emergency tele-communicators. A few were even inspired to join the military.

Looking to the future, the academy intends on continuing to build on the program. Their hope is to partner with the state fire academy for potential skills testing and certification, as well as to expand the curriculum to include emergency medical training (EMT) to students who qualify.

For more information about the program, visit www.rcsd.ms/about-rcsd/academies.

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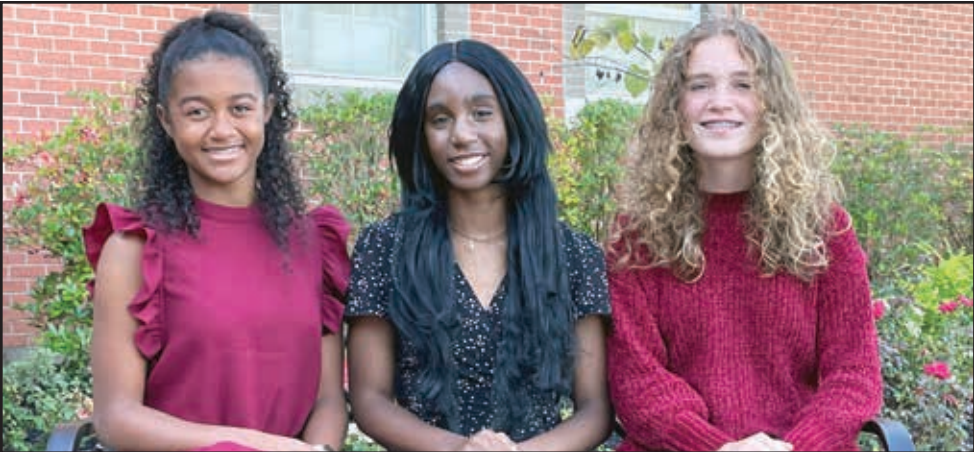
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Pearl High School presents 2021 homecoming maids



The PHS 2021 Freshman Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are: Kai Jenkins, Aaliyah Horn and Isabella Ashley.



The PHS 2021 Sophomore Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are: Jayden Neal, Dulce Tapia, Kaitlyn Richardson and Layton Ward.



The PHS 2021 Junior Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Saylor Foster, Kimora Bailey and Anneliese Renfro; and back row: Kedra Dixon, Kate Roa and Kimberely Arevalo.



Photos special to SW Rankin News
The Pearl High School (PHS) 2021 Senior Homecoming Maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Aleyah Mosley, Anzlee Channell and Zamiya Warner; and back row: Footbal Maid Nathaly Aguirre, Lindsay Butler, Mikayla Sills, Alexandria Villanueva and Victoria Taylor.

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CMDSS provides essential resources to the community

Special to SW Rankin News

Central Mississippi Down Syndrome Society (CMDSS) was founded in 2003 by a group of parents who saw a need for local support services for parents of children with Down syndrome. At the time, there truly was nowhere to turn for advice and support.

The mission of CMDSS is to provide those support services and promote awareness, acceptance, and inclusion in the community. Since its inception, the organization has grown to include staff, while offering more programming, teacher grants and community outreach. There is also a board of directors who play a critical role in all aspects of planning events and fundraising. Every board member possesses a unique skill-set, providing ongoing guidance and support that compliments the organization's ongoing activities.

As part of their mission, each October, CMDSS hosts a local walk, "The Buddy Walk," held at Trustmark Park in Pearl. The original Buddy Walk was established in 1995 by the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) to celebrate Down Syndrome Awareness Month in October and to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with Down syndrome.



Special to SW Rankin News

Today, the Buddy Walk program is supported nationally by NDSS and organized at the local level by parent support groups, schools and other organizations and individuals. Although the focus of the walk is Down syndrome, the event itself is all-inclusive – CMDSS has many organizations that support people with both intellectual and physical disabilities who participate in this event

with whom they work year-round.

Registration for the Buddy Walk is always free. That said, the Buddy Walk is CMDSS's largest fundraiser. Many of the participating teams fundraise on behalf of their favorite Buddy and earn incentives like being featured on local billboards. Funding from the Buddy Walk supports a number of CMDSS programs, including new parent support,

teacher grants, full-color awareness calendar, educational seminars, advocacy and awareness.

Despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed, it has not slowed progress for CMDSS. They have continued to function well by relying heavily on technology. Since the spring of 2020, CMDSS has hosted a variety of online events: dance classes, cookie decorating classes and educational events.

In that spirit, this year, CMDSS modified the walk to keep families safe. They hosted a drive-thru event which included a DJ, drumline, cheerleaders and lots of familiar movie characters and which was livestreamed on their Facebook page. The program also included a prayer, the national anthem and color guard, all featuring adults with Down syndrome from the local community.

The work for CMDSS does not end there; they continue to lay groundwork for new and upcoming programs, including a new parent dinner and a holiday party.

Anyone interested in volunteering at future events may complete a volunteer form at www.cmdss.org.

Those interested in getting involved can reach out via email at info@cmdss.org or call 601-385-DOWN.

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Florence High School selects 2021 Homecoming Court

Special to SW Rankin News

The Florence High School (FHS) student body recently elected homecoming maids to represent each of the grade-level classes. The Florence school zone observed homecoming the week of September 27.

Representing the senior Class of 2022 are Coriyanna Benson, daughter of Monique Hines and Brandon Barnes; Neely Cooper, daughter of Chad and Carrie Cooper; Brianna Cousin, daughter of Bryant and Tiffany Cousin; Charity Gosnell, daughter of Don and Myra Gosnell; Shaelynn Quick, daughter of Deric and Gina Quick; Brookly Sistrunk, daughter of Brent and Labreeska Sistrunk; and Mattie Walker, daughter of Ronnie and Lashell Walker.

The junior Class of 2023 are represented by Addison Errington, daughter of Nick and Angela Errington; Christina Guzman, daughter of Miguel and Maria Guzman; Skylar Ingram, daughter of Karen Ingram and the late Jeff Ingram; Hannah Grace Reed, daughter of Keith and Angel Reed; and Maelee Starbuck, daughter of Andy and Lindsay Starbuck.

The sophomore Class of 2024 representatives are Lacy Burns, daughter of Brad and Ashley Burns; Brelyn Muse,

daughter of Brian and Jennifer Muse; Faith Quick, daughter of Herman and Sandra Quick; Laney Smith, daughter of Sandy Smith and Jason Smith; Annelise Weathersby, daughter of Randy and Laurie Weathersby; and Ava Grace Weathersby, daughter of Randy and Laurie Weathersby.

The freshmen maids representing the Class of 2025 are Taylor Beam, daughter of Katheryn McCardle and Michael Beam; Ryleigh Bishop, daughter of Jonathan and Amy Bishop; Katie Beth Kennedy, daughter of Sarah Fletcher and Scott Kennedy; Caroline Sanford, daughter of Mark and Crystal Sanford; and Carly Jo Smith, daughter of Bo and Emily Smith.

FHS Homecoming 2021 concluded



2021 Florence High School homecoming court. Special to SW Rankin News

with the Florence Eagles vs. Wayne County football game on Friday, October 1. The presentation of the homecoming court was held at 6:15 p.m. Friday, prior to kickoff of the football game, where the 2021 FHS Homecoming Queen and the 2021 FHS Football Queen were crowned.

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M-Braves claim Double-A South Championship

Special to SW Rankin News

The Mississippi Braves recently won the Double-A South Championship with a 2-1 victory over the Montgomery Biscuits. The league championship is the second in M-Braves (3-2) history and the first since claiming the Southern League Championship in 2008. Like the 2008 club, the 2021 club won by one run in game five of the series.

The M-Braves recorded the best winning percentage in club history (.604) by finishing 67-44 during the regular season. The club won the league by eight games over the Biscuits.

Alan Rangel (W, 1-0), Brandon White, Jake Higginbotham, and Nolan Kingham combined to retire 20-straight batters from the third inning to the ninth inning. The twenty-four-year-old Rangel was brilliant through 6.0 innings of one-run baseball in his first postseason start and first in eleven days, walking just one and striking out eight for the victory.

The Biscuits (2-3) got on the board first in the top of the second inning. Jim Haley singled and stole second base. Then, he attempted to tag up to third base on a flyout to left field. However, the throw from Trey Harris hit Haley during his slide and glanced towards the dugout, allowing him to score and give the Biscuits a 1-0 lead.

Shea Langeliers started the bottom of the second inning with a walk and took second base on a wild pitch. CJ Alexander followed with an RBI double down the right-field line to tie the game at 1-1. Greyson Jenista broke the tie in the bottom of the sixth inning with a solo home run to right field to give the M-Braves a 2-1 lead. The homer was Jenista's third of the Championship Series and 22nd on the season. Overall the M-Braves hit seven long balls during the five-game series.

White (H, 1) started the top of the seventh inning to relieve Rangel in the top of the seventh inning. White had a 1-2-3 inning with two strikeouts. The right-hander logged 5.0 scoreless innings in the series.

Higginbotham (H, 1) turned in a 1-2-3 eighth inning with two strikeouts in his third postseason appearance.

Kingham (S, 3) gave up a two-out single in the ninth to Ruben Cardenas to break up the twenty-straight retired streak but got Cal Stevenson to pop out in foul ground to Alexander at third to seal the title.

The Mississippi Braves will look to defend their league title beginning April 8, 2022 against these same Montgomery Biscuits at Trustmark Park.



The Double-A South Championship Trophy.



Photos special to SW Rankin News

2021 Mississippi Braves, Double-A South Champions.



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Richland High School introduces 2021 homecoming court



Richland High School celebrated their 2021 Homecoming on Friday, September 17. The 2021 senior homecoming maids pictured (l to r) are, front row: Lona Quichocho, Alyssa Grantham, Sydney Ragsdale, Bayleigh Harris, Trinity Jordan and Laila Anderson; middle row: Alainah Alexander, Bree Mitchell, Macie Ray Tagert, Madison Archuleta, Isa Alvarado, Makayla Sanford, Ciera Johnson and Kylie Sutphin; and back row: Chloe Owens, Emily Bridges, Jordan Whittington, Cierra Sheppard, Jaylen Bridges, Chelsey Courtney and Mattie Belle Tagert. Not pictured is Peyton Perkins.

FMS celebrates employees, students of the month



Eighth-grade August Student of the Month George Barnett, sixth-grade August Student of the Month Brooke Bridges and seventh-grade August Student of the Month Addison Grantham.



Principal Keith Reed with August Teacher of the Month Bridgette Thomas.



August Staff Member of the Month Patti Hauser with Principal Keith Reed.

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Vance of MPB, guest speaker for Florentine Club

Key to the City presented to longtime Pearl resident



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Jessie Buckley and Mary Alice Hydrick; and back row: President Dianne Roberts, Judy Webb, Kathy Hilton, C J Applewhite, Jeannie Pittman, Charlotte Young, Betty Harpe, Debi Gibson and Dee Payne.

Special to SW Rankin News

Members of the GFWC-MFWC Florentine Club of Florence, met at the City’s community center on September 16. Betty Harpe and Charlotte Young were the hostesses for the meeting. The

members enjoyed the guest speaker, Koo-bee Vance, who provided them with information concerning Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB). The members also brought nonperishable food items for donation to a local school, aiding multiple families in need.



Special to SW Rankin News

Pictured (l to r) are: Pauline Greer Corban and Pearl Mayor Jake Windham.

Special to SW Rankin News

Longtime Pearl resident and teacher Pauline Greer Corban recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday with a Key to the City and proclamation presentation by Mayor Jake Windham.

Corban moved to Pearl in 1950 and was a music teacher in Pearl schools until she retired in 1986. In the proclamation, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen recognized Corban for her lifelong sharing and love of music to her students, her community and the church.

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Top Rangers honored at Richland Junior High School



Special to SW Rankin News

The Top Ranger Award is given to students who have shown exemplary behavior in and out of the classroom. Students receiving this award have been standout students and have continually worked hard at their coursework. Pictured (l to r) are, front row: Katherine Sanchez, Lessie Broome, Kennedy Knippers, Sarah Bates, Kyleigh Williams and Madelyn Palmer; and back row: Jose Prestage, Landon Vaughn, Mason Browning, Aiden West, Dreton Beverly, Isidro Vieyra, Martin Vaca, Christopher Greenwood, Joshua Corneliusen and JJ Lovorn.

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RHS's Character Trait Student of the Month honored



Special to SW Rankin News

Chance Harvey is Richland High School's (RHS) August Character Trait Student of the Month. The character trait for the month was wisdom. Harvey is a junior, and he is always looking for and following ways to be successful in his high school career.

MRC names Simpson as Employee of the Quarter

Special to SW Rankin News

Methodist Rehabilitation Center (MRC) has announced Clinical and Support Service Employees of the Quarter for its Jackson hospital and external campuses. For the third quarter of 2021, the honorees included Sarah Simpson of Pearl, a therapy tech for MRC's spinal cord injury program.

Methodist Rehabilitation Center provides comprehensive inpatient medical rehabilitation programs for people with spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke and other neurological and orthopedic disorders.

MRC's external campuses include Methodist Outpatient Therapy clinics in Flowood and Ridgeland, Methodist Specialty Care Center in Flowood, Methodist Physical Medicine in




Special to SW Rankin News

Sarah Simpson

Flowood, and Methodist Orthotics & Prosthetics clinics in Flowood, Biloxi, Meridian, Hattiesburg, Cleveland, Oxford, Starkville and Monroe, Louisiana.

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October book report: An Oscar Wilde ghost story

By Beth Woodmansee for The Friends of the Richland Library

The Canterville Ghost, published in 1887, was written by Oscar Wilde, (1854 – 1900), the famous Irish poet and playwright. He set his humorous tale in the 1880s, in an English country estate, Canterville Chase, which had been haunted for 300 years. Sir Simon de Canterville killed his wife in 1575; her brothers walled him up in an alcove of the Chase and starved him to death. They kept this a secret, cursing Sir Simon to haunt the Chase until someone helped him.

Things were going frighteningly well for Sir Simon until, in the 1880s, the current Lord Canterville sold Canterville Chase to an American family. Lord Canterville warned Mr. Hiram B. Otis about the ghost. Mr. Otis said he didn't believe in ghosts and closed the deal. In July, Mr. Otis, his wife, Lucretia, their eldest son, Washington, daughter Virginia, a lovely, quiet girl of fifteen and the twins, bright, adventurous boys of ten, moved to Canterville Chase. That first night, Mrs. Otis spotted a dull-red blood stain on the library floor and became upset when the old housekeeper said it had been there for 300 years and could not be removed. Washington Otis immediately scrubbed the stain with a stick of "Pinkerton's Champion Stain Remover and Paragon Detergent," and it disappeared. A flash of lightning lit up the room, and a deafening peal of thunder caused them all to jump to their feet. The old housekeeper fainted. The next morning, the stain was back. Washington again rubbed it out; but every morning, it returned.

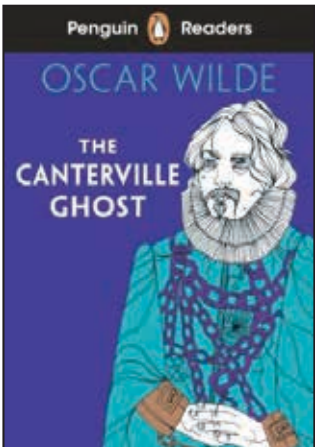
Despite using all of his ghostly tricks, Sir Simon failed to scare the Americans away. Rather, the Otis twins harassed him mercilessly. Their favorite prank

was to grease the landing, then laugh at the ghost as he bounced down the stairs. After weeks of this, the only thing the ghost managed to do was renew the blood stain every night. Each morning, it would be a different color - purple, vermillion, or emerald green.

Weeks passed, and Sir Simon, practically an invalid, retired to his room. One day, Virginia passed by his room and, hearing sobs, she peeked into the room and saw the ghost himself, Sir Simon de Canterville, sitting by the window, woefully sad. Virginia said she was sorry for him. The ghost admitted to Virginia he had killed his wife and deserved his punishment. This saddened Virginia; but she got mad at him for stealing her paints. He said he had to have something to renew the blood stain every morning, and real blood was hard to find! He sobbed he hadn't slept for the 300 years he'd been a ghost. He described a beautiful garden deep in the woods where all was peaceful—the "Garden of Death" - and asked

Virginia to open the portals of the "Garden of Death" for him, telling Virginia that love is always with her and love is stronger than death. Virginia was afraid; but she walked with the ghost through the wainscoting, where it was cold and frightening.

At midnight, Virginia returned through the wainscoting and said she'd taken the ghost to the "Garden of Death," and he was truly dead. He'd been very wicked; but he was so sorry for all that he had done that he gave her a lovely box of jewels for her help. Virginia wore those jewels when she married the Duke of Cheshire and was presented to the Queen. As for the ghost, Sir Simon de Canterville was never seen nor heard since that night when Virginia helped him to find rest in the "Garden of Death."



Special to SW Rankin News

McLaurin announces 2021 Homecoming Court



Pictured (l to r) are MHS's 2021 Football Princess Madilyn Hemphill and 2021 Homecoming Queen Adayah Wood.



Photo special to SW Rankin News

The McLaurin High School (MHS) 2021 Homecoming Court

1 IN 4

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN HAS A VISION PROBLEM

The image shows four stylized faces of children, two boys and two girls, arranged in a row. They are all looking forward. The faces are simple, with large eyes and small mouths. The background is a light gray.

The majority of these problems have no easy-to-detect symptoms.

EYECARE ASSOCIATES

The image shows a stylized graphic of a human eye. The eye is large and detailed, with a prominent iris and pupil. The eyelashes are long and dark. The background is a light gray.

OPTICAL 2000

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Fax: (601) 924-4100

Dr. Bobby C. Pankey
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8:30AM – 5:00PM

CMPDD provides COVID-19 vaccinations to homebound

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Central Mississippi Planning & Development District, Inc. (CMPDD) Area Agency on Aging is currently providing in-home COVID-19 vaccination. A nurse administers a vaccine, free of charge, at the residence of those who are homebound. No assessment is required for this service. Contact CMPDD's Mississippi Access to Care (MAC) Center at 844-822-4622 to request a COVID-19 vaccine. This service includes the first and second doses.

For those interested in being vaccinated, but lack transportation, CMPDD also provides transportation to vaccination sites – from pick-up, transport to the facility as well as the return ride home.

This program will continue as long as funds are available.

The main purpose of the MAC Center is to provide assistance to the elderly as well as people with disabilities – along with their families and representatives. Finding long-term care services and supports to keep them living well and independently is the Center's main objective.

It is a welcoming and accessible place located in Jackson, where people can obtain unbiased information and assistance



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in locating services and supports. The MAC Center provides a central source of reliable and objective information about a broad range of programs and services. It also helps people understand and evaluate the various options available to them, regardless of income or eligibility for publicly funded long-term care.

The Center specialists provide assistance within the local center, over the telephone, within a person's home, or in another convenient location. All assistance is free and confidential.

To access The MAC Center's comprehensive resource directory, visit www.mississippiaccessstocare.org.

Stewart named Employee of Month at MSH



Special to SW Rankin News

Irma Stewart

Special to SW Rankin News

Irma Stewart has been named Mississippi State Hospital (MSH) August Employee of the Month for Support Services. Stewart, who was born in Chicago and now lives in Pearl, works as a Transition Coordinator in the Social Services Department. Stewart is a graduate of Sawyer Business College in Oak Park, Illinois, and has been an MSH employee since 1998.

The MSH Employee of the Month

award recognizes employees who have made outstanding contributions to the hospital through their work. The program is sponsored by Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, Inc.

MSH, a program of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and helps the individuals it serves achieve mental wellness by encouraging hope, promoting safety, and supporting recovery. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.

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OPE, Parts, Rental, Service

Annie Bridges
OPE, Parts, Rental, Service

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